AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1.   (Currently Amended) A method of reducing bandwidth requirements in an online chat system, comprising the steps of:

        receiving a speech input from a calling party;

        transcribing the speech input to a text message in a same language as the speech input;

        converting the text message to an alternative text message in a same language as the received text message based upon at least one of a calling party profile and a called party profile, wherein at least one of said profiles specifies replacing at least a portion of the text message with an alternative text portion having a same meaning as the replaced portion of the text message, the alternative text portion having a shorter length than the replaced portion of the text message;

        performing data compression to compress the alternative text message prior to transmitting the alternative text message as a data stream defining a text stream;

        transmitting the text stream to the called party;

        receiving the alternative text message by the called party as the text stream; and

        ~~displaying~~ rendering the alternative text message ~~and/or~~ by converting the alternative text message into a speech output at the called party substantially in real-time.

2.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the method further comprises the step of sending a voice signature of the calling party to the called party.

3.   (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the method further comprises the step of maintaining a voice signature repository of the calling party for access by a called party of a voice signature of the calling party when receiving a call from the calling party.

4.   (Cancelled)

5.   (Previously presented) The method of claim 2, wherein the alternative text message is converted at the called party to a speech output by using text-to-speech conversion in conjunction with the voice signature of the calling party.

6.   (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the method further comprises the step of translating the alternative text message to another language to provide a translated alternative text message.

7.   (Previously presented) The method of claim 6, wherein the step of transmitting comprises the step of transmitting the translated alternative text message.

8.   (Previously presented) The method of claim 6, wherein the step of translating the alternative text message occurs in a server on a network coupled between the calling party and the called party.

9.   (Previously presented) The method of claim 6, wherein the translated alternative text message is converted at the called party to a speech output by using text-to-speech synthesis in conjunction with the voice signature of the calling party.

10.   (Previously presented) The method of claim 6, wherein the method further comprises:
        adding the translated alternative text message to the data stream; and
        displaying the translated alternative text message in the called party's location substantially in real-time.

11-21. (Cancelled)

22. (New)   A method of reducing bandwidth requirements in an online chat system for communication between a first party and a second party, the method comprising the steps of:
        with a mobile phone, receiving a speech input from a first party;
        within the mobile phone, transcribing the speech input to text; and

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transmitting from the mobile phone a stream of SMS messages directed to the second party, each SMS message comprising a portion of the text.

23. (New)   The method of claim 22, wherein:

the method further comprises compressing the text; and

transmitting the stream of SMS messages comprises transmitting SMS messages each comprising a portion of the compressed text.

24. (New)   The method of claim 22, further comprising:

at a device operated by the second party, converting the text in the stream of SMS messages to speech; and

rendering the speech as an output to the second party.

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